

CLAIMS:

1. Apparatus for delivering emails including: a database server containing a database made up of a plurality of records, each record in the database defining at least an account holder and an email address, wherein the email address contains at least (in whole or in part) the account holder's telephone number and the account holders name, and wherein each record follows a predetermined structure to facilitate use of that email address by another person.
2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein each record contains instructions concerning the forwarding of an email received at that defined email address, to another email address designated by the account holder.
3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the database contains a plurality of records, preferably more than one per telephone number from a telephone directory, wherein each email address is made up of the account holder's chosen telephone number and (in whole or in part) the account holder's given name.
4. Software for delivering emails to a subscriber, wherein the software contains or controls a database made up of a plurality of records corresponding to the entries in a telephone directory, each record defining an account holder and an email address, the email address containing at least (in whole or in part) the account holder's telephone number and (in whole or in part) the account holder's name, wherein each record follows a predetermined structure to facilitate use of that email address by another person.
5. Software as claimed in claim 4, wherein each record contains instructions concerning the forwarding of an email received at that defined email address, to another email address designated by the account holder.
6. Software as claimed in claim 5, wherein the database contains a plurality of records, preferably more than one per telephone number from the corresponding telephone directory, wherein each email address is made up of the account holder's chosen telephone number and (in whole or in part) the account holder's given name.
7. A method for delivering messages by email to a recipient, wherein an ISP allocates to each person within a defined group, an email address prefix and a defined ISP suffix, the email

address prefix being made up of a unique alphanumeric identification code, each of which codes incorporates a predetermined combination of a telephone number, and an alphabetic component, allowing users of the system to address an email to a recipient by entering the unique alphanumeric identification code with that ISP suffix, transmitting the desired email message to the ISP, the ISP then redirecting the email message to the recipient in a manner determined by the recipient (when registered with the ISP).

8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein if having received an email for a particular recipient, the ISP determines that that recipient has not yet registered with the ISP (even though the sender knows the recipient's pre-allocated email address), the ISP can communicate with that recipient by telephone, or mail or some other medium to encourage the recipient to register in order to receive the email message.
9. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the group is made up of all (or substantially all) of the persons listed in a telephone directory.
10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the group is made up of all (or substantially all) of the persons listed in all of the telephone directories in this country.
11. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the group is made up of all (or substantially all) of the companies or businesses listed in a telephone directory.
12. A database for use in routing messages to account holders, the database containing a plurality of records corresponding to one or more telephone directories, each record in the database defining at least an account holder and an email address, the email address containing at least (in whole or in part) the account holder's telephone number and (in whole or in part) the account holder's name, wherein each record follows a predetermined structure to facilitate use of that email address by another person.
13. A database as claimed in claim 12, wherein each record contains instructions concerning the forwarding of an email received at that defined email address, to another email address designated by the account holder.
14. A database as claimed in claim 12, wherein the database contains a plurality of records, preferably more than one per telephone number from the corresponding telephone directory,

wherein each email address is made up of the account holder's telephone number and (in whole or in part) the account holder's given name.

15. A database as claimed in claim 12, wherein the database contains records corresponding to all or substantially all of the people listed in the telephone directories in any given population in the USA.

16. A messaging system which makes use of a database as claimed in claim 12, wherein the "email address" is used as a "media independent address", the database storing address information for each account holder including one or more of the following: postal address, DX address, courier address, and fax number.

17. A messaging system as claimed in claim 16, wherein the database includes the account holder's wishes as to the preferred means of delivery of the messages, and any filter that the account holder wishes to be placed on incoming messages.

18. A messaging system including a message storage or redirection centre which makes use of an identification system for individuals, which identification system involves allocation to each individual in a group, a unique alphanumeric identification code, each of which codes incorporates a predetermined combination of:

an individual's telephone country number prefix;

an individual's telephone area number;

an alphabetic or alphanumeric representation of at least part of an individual's name; and

at least part of an individual's telephone number (e.g. a listed telephone number).

19. A messaging system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the unique alphanumeric identification code is made up of a string in the sequence:

a-b-c-d,

wherein "a" represents the individual's international telephone country number prefix, "b"

represents the individual's telephone area number, "c" represents the individual's telephone

number and “d” represents the first three letters of the individual’s given name, and the first letter of the individual’s family name.

20. Apparatus for delivering emails including: a database server containing a database made up of a plurality of records, which database relates to a defined public directory, each record in the database defining at least an account holder and an email address, the email address containing at least (in whole or in part) data from the account holder’s record in the public directory and (in whole or in part) the account holder’s name, wherein each record follows a predetermined structure to facilitate use of that email address by another person.
21. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or claim 21 wherein the email may comprise one or more of text, image data, voice or sound data, SMS message, WAP message.
22. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the email may comprise one or more of text, image data, voice or sound data, SMS message, WAP message.